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Ballet to-day

The National Dance Monthly

EDITOR

PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND

Managing Editor: I. E. Herf.
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Preview..

NELSON'S, the educational publishers, have added a volume to their new career series, *How I became A Ballet Dancer*. Written by Peggy van Praagh, this is an over simplified, but nonetheless good book.

By "over simplified" I mean that such statements as "You may have to attend several auditions before you find you are just what they are looking for" would have been more accurate if the word "hundred" had been inserted after "several." But, quite rightly, Peggy van Praagh tries to show the career of ballet in a good light—while still pinpointing the odds against it.

IS BALLET A GOOD CAREER?

Frankly, no. Ballet is one of two things: a magnificent career, or not a career at all. There is no in between "just comfortable" stage such as general medical practitioners enjoy. Only at the top is it good, otherwise it is overworked, out-of-work, and ludicrously underpaid. A huge number of dancers count themselves lucky to earn between five and ten pounds a week.

A plumber, a butler, a cook... they all earn more. But the pot o' gold is the *raison d'être* behind ballet as a career. Like all the arts it is an insecure, underpaid, filthily competitive sphere—but an overnight one. You may be working for six pounds ten today and be offered two hundred a week tomorrow. So it is in all the arts. The painter doing his work at half-a-guinea the time, suddenly starts selling at ten or twenty pounds and up. The writer, existing on a guinea for an article, suddenly is able to demand twenty or thirty guineas.

This is what changes the lot

The Dream of Success

of the dancer from that of the plumber. He, secure, is earning ten pounds now—and will, in thirty years time, still be earning ten pounds. The artist has only Fort Knox as a limit.

Mind you, few reach it. But that does not belittle the fact that the achievement is possible—and it may be *you*.

There is only one proviso. You must never take as goal anything less than fabulous success. You may—and probably will—drop far below this, but your goal must never be minimized to endsmeet with your present

accomplishment. The artist lives, not on the bread of today, but on the manna of the potential tomorrow.

The writer, pasting his rejection slips into his shoes to serve as free soles, thinks of himself with a dozen bestsellers. The singer, in provincial pantomime, dreams of La Scala. The dancer, wondering where the *last* meal is coming from, dreams of... well, she has so many dreams. And what more beautiful, more wonderful than a success dream? Except, perhaps, the success itself?

DEPARTURE

ON the centre spread some ideas are sketched for how ballet as a whole may find its future. These bring in the choreographer and the dancer.

But there are other people in

ballet—the members of the audience, for instance. Unlike the member of the wedding this audience seems hardly insistent upon its own place in the scheme of things.

Ballet is not yet the majority entertainment that the cinema, theatre and ballroom dancing have become. Until it so becomes, those of us who want its success must do more than take an occasional interest.

See more, say more... for the more you see the more right you have to state an honest and personal opinion. See enough to form a good basis for preselection—then support the good and, by refusing to attend, kill off the bad.

And make propaganda for the dance through the best possible media. Talk ballet... today,



Svetlana Beriosova who has used this current Sadler's Wells season to prove the definite maturing of her talent

AVERAGES UPSET BY APRIL

APRIL upset the law of averages—in London at least. So long, so long the dismal cry has been: the male dancer, where? April in London gave us not one answer but four: The seasoned Rene Bon, the incredible Jean Babilée, the new Miskovitch, and one Peter van Dijk.

Miskovitch is discussed with Markova, whose partner he was and is.

But the other three come under the aegis of Janine Charrat whose season began in error and continued as a running failure. It is ironic that a lamentable season should be the framework for three personal triumphs.

Let me upset order of precedence and deal with Peter van

Dijk first. Here is the male dancer with just the qualities we speak of when the ideal or near-ideal *danseur noble* is in question. Clean, rapid feet, incautious elevation; a poise of body which is as manifest—perhaps more manifest—in the air than on the ground, without the “side falling” elevation we are used to; a dignity which is deeper than the frozen “model girl” face of most

of our men; and a complete feeling of sustained effort which one must search for beneath the perfectly assured pose of ease.

On seeing van Dijk I merely murmured “Yes.” And that sums up his effect. During this season, or most seasons, it takes genius to make the overfed critic stiffen, eye intently and smile with the love of the art which originally brought him into it as a trade. Peter van Dijk produces this effect. He is a fine classical dancer of wide range. The name van Dijk will be important in the next quarter century of the dance.

TRANSCENDANCE

On one evening I had the opportunity to watch him in two classical *pas de deux* in succession, one with Janine Charrat, the other with Helene Trailine. Charrat seems to have him more at ease, their long, not perfectly scripted, *Concerto de Grieg* is a love dance at higher level than the average piece of its kind. Here love has left the mere physical—ballet’s most obvious use of it—and is attempting the partly spiritual. For ballet any transcendence of the physical is worthwhile, for it is in the use of the body as a mere visible manifestation (a basis, a starting point) of a grasp, a trend or an emotion that ballet as art fulfills itself.

Most ballet is simply the visual play of body, the nucleus of ballet art is in the furthering of this groundwork into a production of imaginative creation which only uses the body as its tool.

In the *Cygne Noir grand pas de deux* van Dijk was hampered by a Helene Trailine who had decided that the efforts she had initially made were not worthwhile to such poor houses. This is guesswork, but what is sure is that her “interest” in her performance had undergone a dampening after the first week or so.

Peter van Dijk managed, however, to make his own variation neither the freak height-and-



Ballet in Review

PETER CRAIG RAYMOND

length relay race it can be, or the amber-lighted caution the English male dancer so often makes it. Here was lightness, elevation, swift but finished footwork and a general demeanour of calm, masculine confidence.

VEHICLE

Rene Bon danced the White Horse in Charrat’s *Le Massacre des Amazones*. This Grand National of a ballet had one twist, it was the riders who were eventually butchered. I spared no tears, several had danced badly enough to merit the fate. The trouble with Charrat and her horse ballets is that I am continually reminded of Skibine’s *L’Idylle*. And the Skibine always takes preference. The similarity between *Massacre* and *L’Idylle* is embarrassing.

Bon uses the White Horse in the obviously intended way: as a magnificent vehicle for his lightening body. But he is dancer enough not to need quite such a bad production around him to focus his own attractions. The tawdry decor—ripped canvas roughly representing equestrian limbs—and undistinguished choreography are poor mates for the talent of Rene Bon. He was truly superb in the role, his swift turns and *battement* on an angled ramp being mere technical highlights of a sustained *tour de force* of superb dancing.

Le Jeune Homme et la Morte encompassed la morte au jeune fille, too. What was once a significant and composite ballet



returned to London as an intrusion upon one's sight of Jean Babilée. And what of Nathalie Philippart? She walked through the role of Death, uneasy and forgetful. A poor performance. Babilée was, if possible, younger and more firmly at ease *en l'air* than in the past. The whole ballet was staged under the duress of crises apparently without end, yet Babilée flew through *Le Jeune Homme* as if he had been dancing it for years, instead of forgetting it for an equal time.

The production was pitiful, the ending a tragic walkthrough of what, originally, was significant. Here one could only read the programme synopsis and wonder what happened to Cocteau's finale.

EQUIVALENT

Aubade was an unfortunate choice for London; Lifar is not likely, now, to produce a first-night ballet which will appeal to us. The story of Diane and Acteon is the classical equivalent of Petit's legend of the Wolf and the Young Bride. I hesitate to accuse plagiarism on either choreographer, but *Le Loup* is the indisputably finer ballet.

Diana, surprised by Acteon while she bathes, changes him into a stag, wounds him, and has him chased by his friends whom, far reachingly, she has meanwhile changed into hounds. And, like an M.P. after a lobbying with a Cruel Sports Society propagandist, she goes on her way unflustered.

Helene Trailine makes of Diane an attractive, rather saucy goddess and Jean Bernard Lemoine is an excellent Acteon. Here is another man who rather upsets the law of averages in male dancing.

The decor (four quite aloof pillars and one painted pillar, broken) is in keeping with that of much of the repertoire. A harking to greys and blacks, practice suits and mere fobs of decor did not help Charrat attract the London dance audience.

Herakles concerns the struggle of man against temptation of vice and against the celibate amour of virtue. He dies by falling between the two, as most men do without fatality, and the pair of opposites trot off to "other adventures" as the programme note heartlessly states it.

The best part of this ballet is in the five-girl movement impersonating the brazen-footed Hind. The other idea which sounded choreographically ingenious was the tunic of Nessos which Virtue persuades Herakles to wear. Immediately, Herakles feels his flesh frizzling under the fire of this hothouse straight-jacket. Unfortunately the idea is not well-conveyed balletically and does not amount to much.

SATISFACTION.

One other *pas de deux* made up the season, Gsovsky's *Pas Classique d'Auber*. This we recently managed to forget during the Cuevas season. Trailine and Lemoine danced well, but it is a poor pastiche.

Symphony, to Beethoven's first, is a Balachinesque-Massinesque symphonic ballet which, true to type, repeats every idea—no matter how trite—a dozen times before being satisfied. The audience fails to share the satisfaction.

Les Algues is a production by Castelli who was responsible for the indigestibly-full Golovine ballet for the Cuevas company. As a ballet *Les Algues* is overlong and is limited by the fact that ballet is not completely compatible with the cinematic technique Castelli has used.

The plot is of a young man who, making love to his girl¹ becomes too passionate for her weak nature and jolts the balance of her mind. He contrives to enter the same lunatic asylum that incarcerates her, with the idea of bringing her back to sanity. Instead he is almost dragged down himself. Eventually he leaves his love in the hell he unwittingly drove her into.

Rene Bon, Janine Charrat in
Massacre des Amazones



Les Algues

For theatrical effect Castelli has reversed the chronology of the plot and so rather muddles the viewer. We start in the asylum, go to the ball at which his lovemaking had caused the tragedy, then return to the asylum.

MISTAKE

The season started badly, with two poorly chosen ballets and *Les Algues* which was not, perhaps, the kind of light entertainment to set London by its pleasure-loving ears. This mistake proved fatal to Charrat and the season never recovered its initial word-of-mouth publicity. But worse was to come—first nights missed, injuries, dancers who did not arrive, decor that did—but only by half... and a general chaos of production details, lighting and other accoutrements of success.

Perhaps Charrat thought she could do without the paraphernalia of the well-ordered theatre. This season must have taught her a sobering lesson. Perhaps her most annoying mistake was to think audiences would take intervals unlimited. They will not, here at least.

On one evening we had three intervals—one of thirty-five minutes which preceded a ballet running under twenty minutes which preceded an interval of twenty-three minutes. Even in the month of Entente Cordiale we could not pass all this unnoticed.

If the season was an uncleaned diamond, it did—when washed—produce a few gems. But, sadly, few of the audience were left to witness the emergence. Most had given up a season which like most art-for-art's-sake, had not enough of the one quality for which it is ready to die.

EB: Ice ballet has, in the past five years, become of increasingly greater interest to the public here. As I see it there is a future to be worked out for skating and the ballet working together. To set this discussion going, do you agree with this precept?

PC-R: Frankly, no. I am ready to be convinced, though. Ice skating has several fundamental oppositions to the ballet. First of all the art of ballet is to achieve difficult, and body-straining physical feats whilst hiding completely any sense of strain. Ice skating conveys the strain as an integral part of its "show." Put better, I would say ballet makes an art out of hiding effort, skating makes effort a criteria. This comes, I think, from the examination thinking in ice skating. Almost all ice dancers are contracted by impressarios after winning championships. The supposition that a girl who can execute textbook markings is of necessity a good dancer, showman and stage artist is nonsense. Barbara Ann Scott proved that, for one.

EB: Have you watched much ice skating, then?

PC-R: No. Very little, in fact. It bores me in the same way that any effort-for-effort's-sake idea bores me. I have watched Barbara Ann Scott, Gloria Nord, Belita (recently at the Hippodrome in *Champagne on Ice*) and young Andra McLauchlin in a televised ice programme. And, of course, Henie. I talked for quite a time with Sonja last year and was completely unimpressed by her statements, and, later, by her work. She told me, for example, that she spent months in deep native study of the *hula*. And then put on ice as much of the authentic *hula* as a chorus girl in a nitery.

EB: But is that a fair comparison? You seem to be comparing ice dancing to ballet and, as the one does not correspond to the other, damning ice dancing on a criteria it has never accepted.

PC-R: You mean I have not been told I was watching ice ballet a hundred times?

EB: Oh, yes, they use the word . . .

PC-R: And I keep them to the word they use. So long as they call it ice skating or ice dancing I have nothing to say, but the use of the word "ballet" is improper because of the affiliations in the public's mind it deliberately sets up.

EB: The point we want to get to, I think, is whether there is, in fact, any kind of theatrical future for ice dancing.



PC-R: Before ice skating can become a theatrically cohesive entertainment form (I admit it can already be theatrically effective, but only momentarily) it needs to rid itself of the long preparation which is, at the moment, invariable. What I mean (I must speak very untechnically here, I'm afraid) is that the ice dancer can execute, say, a short enchainement and—where, in ballet, she would go on to a climax or lengthy working-out—she must rush forward, around the side of stage or rink, and back into her original position. All this she does because her execution depends upon the capacity worked up by speed. This working-up of speed, this preparation, is killing to theatrical usage. It must always look the same because it always is the same—a mere recharging of a technical, physical battery. That is obstacle one. Obviously only very limited effects can be achieved with this obstacle as hindrance. Any length of effect is impossible. And, this accepted, so is any creative projection by ice dancing. The constant speed preparation is to ice dancing what a curtain coming down every couple of minutes would be to ballet. It kills the fantasy, loses continuity, and keeps the audience aware that they are watching technical skill. All of this is contrary to theatrical law and sense.

EB: That is, surely, a sweeping statement? I doubt if any ice dancer would accept your complete lack of acceptance.

PC-R: Interestingly enough one did. The only one I have discussed this with, in fact. She has taken to ballet study in an effort to remove the very anti-

Theme:

Ice Ballet

A Tape Recorded Discussion between

EDITH BARKING

and

PETER CRAIG-
RAYMOND

● Readers are invited to suggest themes and speakers for these discussions.

theatrical points I make. I discussed preparation and these other things with her and, as a professional performer, she could confirm that they are, in fact, her obstacles. Whether she will defeat them or not we cannot tell yet. I only made the point to her that she must not "take ballet" in any accepted way but merely steal from ballet technique what elements can be assimilated to good effect by the skater. Obviously the first lesson to be learned is that effort and strain are necessities, not showing virtues. This is in direct contradiction to examination and championship thinking in the skating business which led me directly to point two: the skater in the theatre cannot serve the proverbial two masters. She cannot do her figures and tricks for the skating initiate and achieve her professional look for the theatregoer. One or the other.

EB: Did she agree?

PC-R: Yes. But, more to the point, she—and I hope other ice dancers—are experimenting. Probably, I am guessing, they will go more in the direction of the free dancers with a smattering of classical ballet technique than in the direction of clearcut ballet itself. I don't know. But I do wish ballet could go and pick the brains of something else in the way these other people pick ballet's enfattened brain.

EB: Trying to see ice dancing as an art in itself, not—as you do apparently—as a mere passenger to ballet, I would say that the speed you condemn gives ice dancing the very scope which differentiates it so completely from ballet. I remember one

ice skating judge telling me the story of how he asked a young competitor at St. Moritz: "Do you ever skate?" And she, amazed, said "All the time, you know that." To which he replied, "Yes, but I always see you in the air." This is the very thing ballet is always trying to achieve—the look of flying. The legends in ballet are of dancers who were like birds. Is it not a point in skating's favour, then, that it has speed, aerial ease, incredible facility in spins, and turns and an impressive range of fantastic air leaps and bounds? And, remember, the advantage of moving backwards at speed and effecting many movements backwards which ballet does not have.

PC-R: I am astounded that there is one way of going backwards which ballet has not found.

EB: But seriously, do you admit these benefits?

PC-R: Certainly. But what concerns me is the use to which simply technical benefits are put in the service of art. Remember that many sportsmen have better "elevation" than dancers. But nobody watches sport for the physical "look" accomplished.

EB: Can we at least agree that ice dancing may have a future if, in conjunction with ballet techniques, it achieves a greater theatrical professionalism. Is that what you are getting at?

PC-R: No, not completely, I'm afraid. If ice dancing is to have a future it must (contrary to what you said I was doing to it) achieve it, not independently but less interdependently. It must take its various shots-in-the-arm from whatever sources there are—although they should be more authentic than those tapped by Sonja for her *hula*—and build up a technical system of its own for theatrical ice dancing. The whole emphasis must be shifted from the present one of technique and the bodily factors upon which technique hinges. The emphasis must be placed on theatrical effectiveness, continuity, hiding of preparation and creative purpose. That done, ice dancing will have its place as a dancing art. Now? It is a sport or a physical exercise. But several of its adherents are working towards artistic stance. I hope they achieve it.

● The next feature in this series will be published in the August issue.

Now that these two companies are well established, it has finally been proved that professional ballet *can* exist in Canada and it is up to the public to continue their support.

Ballet in Canada

FESTIVAL

There are plenty of small groups scattered across the country and every year they gather together in a leading city to show what they are doing. Although not professionals the standard of work shown is very high. For this annual Ballet Festival, musicians are commissioned to compose new ballets, designers create new decor, not to mention the original works by unknown choreographers. Many Canadian themes are used and why not, as certainly Canada has quite a history of her own. A number of dancers gain experience from the Ballet Festival and are soon ready for the National Ballet or the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. What started out about six years ago to be a Festival with only three groups participating, and now increased to over sixteen, shows the growing interest in ballet which is sweeping the nation.

Ballet is still in its infancy in Canada as compared to other countries, but should it continue at the present pace, its natural growth is imminent.

*A shot of
Markova with
The Winnipeg
Ballet*

aside to make way for the up-and-coming ballerinas. A married couple, David Adams and Lois Smith, dance the important main parts.

The National Ballet Company has won much praise and is now backed by socially prominent Canadians who think it is a good investment.

Command Performance before Queen Elizabeth, then Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh during their tour of Canada in 1951. The company has since been called the Royal Winnipeg Ballet.

With several tours of Canada to their credit, the company are now touring the United States, having opened in Washington in March, to an audience which included diplomats from many countries. The notices they received across the border were very favourable and they were described as "a fresh and vibrant troupe of which Canadians can feel proud."

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet is now one of Canada's prime hopes of keeping her dancers inside their own country.

NATIONAL

Another welcome sign on the changing Canadian Ballet scene is the National Ballet Company. Four years ago in Toronto, Celia Franca, formerly of the Sadlers' Wells, was asked by a committee, to audition young hopefuls to form the nucleus of a national company. There was a great deal of talent from the many schools across the country, but the more fortunate were weeded out and they now comprise the National Ballet Company of Canada.

The group's repertoire consists of many of the classics, but Miss Franca is interested in discovering new Canadian choreographers. Antony Tudor's *Lilac Garden* has recently been included in the works of the company. At first Celia Franca danced the leading roles but has now stepped



BALLET at home seemed non-existent before the war except for the fact that there were many schools across the country and yearly visits were made by American companies. The obvious thing to do in those days would be to go south of the border or across to England if you wanted to further your career. Canadian dancers were certainly not lacking in talent but there was just no outlet.

The first appearance of the Sadlers Wells in Montreal and Toronto prompted interest to mount to an incredibly large degree. I need not tell you that seats were sold out in advance and how thoroughly successful their tour was. Undoubtedly, there were plenty of ballet lovers in Canada, but they could not foresee a permanent company of their own.

In the meantime, in spite of public opinion, a group was taking shape out in Winnipeg under Gwenneth Lloyd, an ambitious, middle-aged English-woman, who settled in Canada. This group has been in existence for over twelve years but now the natives of Winnipeg regard their ballet company with almost as much esteem as their local football team.

NOTED

This group is noted for its many new and artistic ballets mostly the work of its director, Miss Lloyd. One of the most popular ballets is *The Shooting of Dan McGrew*, a parody based on Robert Service's famous poem.

The progress of this company reached such a high professional calibre that it performed at a

Ballet Needs Parody and Satire . . . HAVE WE TOO MUCH REVERENCE?



IT is always salutary for an artist to be able to laugh at himself. It helps to keep a sense of proportion, which is often sadly lacking in the world of ballet on both sides of the footlights.

When, for example, one reads the solemn pronouncements of "Free Dancers" from Isadora Duncan onwards, it is the air of righteous indignation, of deadly seriousness, an almost total inability to see the ridiculous side of their own pretensions, that is most disturbing. For ballet is also a gay art; it is a form of entertainment, not a thesis for a doctorate in philosophy or a agree in the social sciences. It can deal with grave subjects, but fortunately it can also mock its own gravity.

DEFLATE

Parody is useful in that it may deflate a choreographer who is in danger of taking himself too seriously; it is also useful for



making fun of the classical ballet, because this is in danger of being suffocated by its own admirers. Petipa and Ivanov are treated with almost religious devotion; one would think that Roland Petit, by mocking some of its more absurd conventions, had laughed in church, to listen to the indignant complaints of some balletomanes.

I do not intend to discuss social satire as exemplified in works like Nijinska's *Les Biches*, political satire like Jooss's *Green Table*, or the activities of the "Free Dancers" who went fishing for red herrings in the muddled waters of the "Thirties." Their work has now a quaint period charm, and the obituaries have been too frequently written. More interesting are the two types of satire—those that deal with the world of ballet itself, and those that ridicule the conventions of classical dancing.

An excellent example of the former type is Anthony Tudor's *Gala Performance*, which is a satire on the spectacular ballets of the Romantic Era and the rivalries of three ballerinas from Moscow, Milan and Paris who represent the three diverse styles of classical dancing at that period. France, Italy and Russia have between them formed the classical styles; and Tudor shows us how they met and clashed. It is a potted history of ballet, as well as the story of three potty ballerinas.

EARLIER

Ninette de Valois in *The Prospect Before Us* went to an earlier period—that of Noverre, and in the fourth scene presents us with a charming *pastiche* of a ballet of that period whose accuracy was not fully realised until the Royal Danish Ballet presented *The Whims of Cupid and the Ballet Master* (composed in 1786)

in London last year. This time de Valois is concerned with the rivalries of theatrical managers, but the back-stage scenes have the same pointed wit as those in Tudor's ballet.

It is noticeable in these ballets, as also in Ana Ricarda's feeble *La Tertulia* which is based on the same theme, that certain features are constant: the temperamental ballerina, the jealousy the harried resentful *coryphees* and the absurd arrogance of the male dancer.

In Tudor's ballet he is a sad fellow because he has degenerated into a decorated puppet whose whims are the more absurd because of his negative role in the ballet that follows. These things do not belong to any one period—the luckless male dancer is still treated with the same contempt by Balanchine in his ballets today; nor are the back-stage rivalries and jealousies unknown either.

CONTRAST

The satire of this type of ballet lies in the contrast between the art and its all too human exponents. The miniature ballets presented in them are *pastiche*: even in *Gala Performance* Tudor did not originally intend that this should be a parody of classical dancing; it was only after the first performances that the dancers were encouraged to guy it. Later in *La Gloire* he attempted a serious treatment of the subject, on a much deeper level. He meant, I believe, to allow the music to swamp the action (for which he was angrily criticised) in order to demonstrate the contrast between the majesty of the roles his actress performed and the pettiness and bitterness of her own private life. *La Gloire* is a serious restatement of *Gala Performance*.

When Mr. O'Reilly makes his celebrated final entrance in *The Prospect Before Us* the ballet moves away from satire into sheer parody. His "variation" with its absurd imitation *bourrees*, splayed fingers and flapping hands comes from a nightmare a ballerina might have about her own performance in *Swan Lake*. Roland Petit has treated the footling little dance of the four swans with the same healthy irreverence; the vision of them in *Ballabile* scratching the ground with their feet like angry old

hens rests more happily in the memory than the actual dance it parodies.

DISTORT

In *Deuil en 24 Heures* Petit relies on sudden witty distortions of classical *pas* to achieve his effect. The long *pas de deux* in the duel scene is beautiful in itself, but just as we are about to accept it on its face value the *danseuse* is flung up in a ridiculous *lift* with her toes turned up and outwards.

Petit is laughing at himself, for much of this dance might have come from his serious ballets; but it is just too solemn to be true.

Ashton in the *pas de deux* from *A Wedding Bouquet* uses the same mock gravity. The ponderous solemnity of his *adagio* with its purposeful walks and slow unfolding of limbs might have come from *Casse Noisette*—except that the ballerina is here held either upside down or under her partner's arm like a heavy parcel.

The bemused bridegroom is the essence of all those cardboard princes of classical ballet and of the unhappy young men who lope somewhat shamefacedly in the background of Balanchine's ballets.

The symphonic ballets have been happily ridiculed by Frank Staff in *Czernyana*, while in *Peter and the Wolf* the dead duck rises from her pool, veiled and mysterious, like Giselle from her tomb. Walter Gore in *Carte Blanche* does a similar service to Balanchine when the dancers run giddily round in circles and their *tutus* hang suspended above them.

IMPRESSIVE

The most impressive of all ballets of this type is Ashton's *Scenes de Ballet* which catches the implications of Strawinski's wry, nostalgic music to perfection. The subtle wit of Ashton's modern comment upon the Rose *Adagio* is exactly that of Strawinski's comment upon the music of Tchaikowski; it is not so much parody as an affectionate restatement of an old tradition in ballet music and choreography in terms of modern dance creation. It is by turns mocking, sentimental and highly sophisticated; and still remains one of the most remarkable ballets of our time.

Thus, whether it is Balanchine's Sylph in *A La Francaix* who turns into a bathing beauty, Ashton's Julia in *A Wedding Bouquet* who turns into a French provincial town Giselle, or de Valois' Mr. O'Reilly who turns into a red-nosed Odette, the ancient tradition of dance parody is today as alive and valuable as ever.

The traditionalists need not be shocked, because the great works of the past are more likely to be preserved if we are on familiar terms with them than if they are treated with devout respect. Nothing deadens a work of art quicker than too much reverence.

by Richard Austin. Drawings by Helen Forrest of Lady and the Fool



Top right: Galina Ulanova greeted in Paris by Nina Vyroubova, Michel Renault, Carlotta Zambelli, Liane Dayde, and other dancers. Photo.: Lido.

Above: P. Gerbek seen in the role of Neurali in *The Fountain of Bakhtchissarai*. Gerbek comes from the theatre and opera ballets in Kirov and Leningrad.

Right: Galina Ulanova, Eugenie Farmaniantz and I. Tikhomirnova in one of the Moscow Grand Theatre practise rooms. Photo.: Ymhoba.



AS we went to press with the pages we had planned on the Soviet Ballet in Paris, the season was finally "off". The theatre's excuse for banning Ulanova was that the Frent defeat at Bein Dein Phu had raised public sentiments against the Soviet Ballet's appearance in Paris.

This follows last month's news of Ulanova being refused by the United States Ballet Theatre.

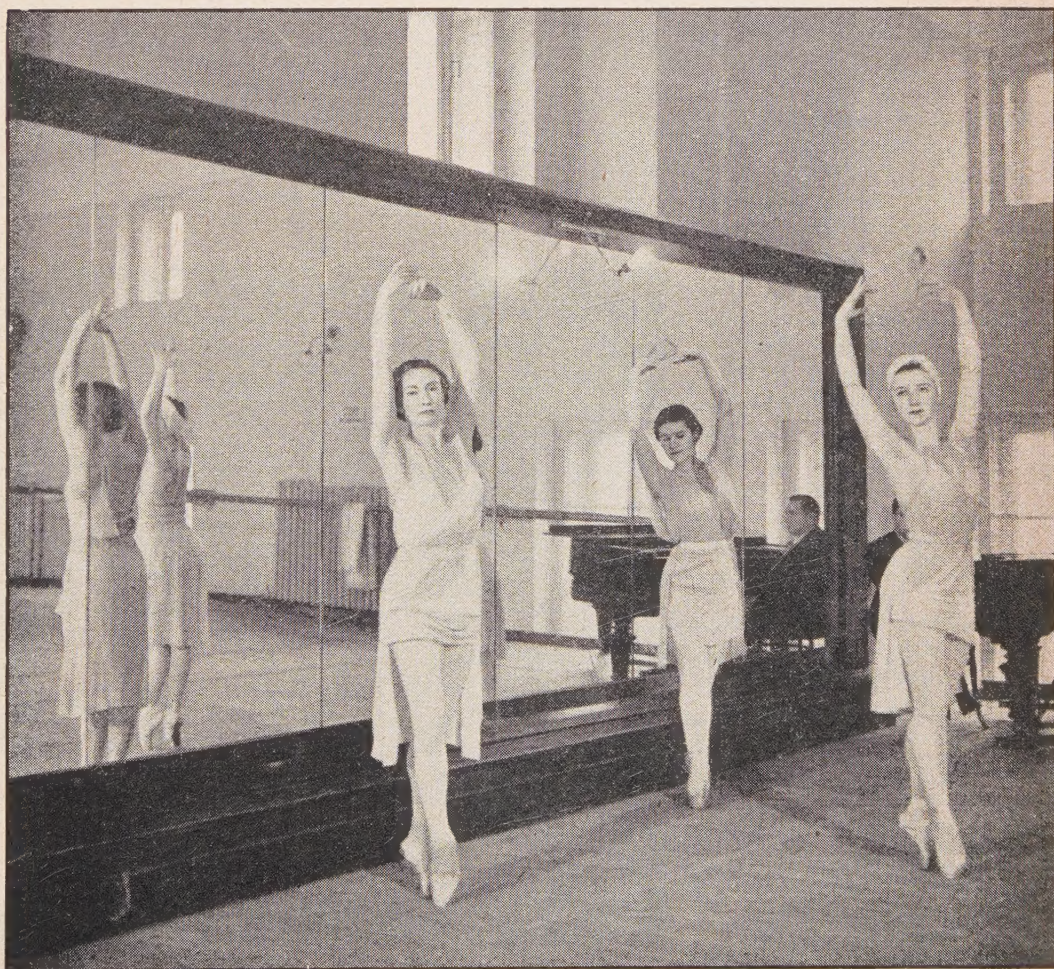
If Bein Dein Phu was a French defeat, the childish attitude to the Soviet dancers was defeat two. Art should not receive stageroom as a political or patriotic weapon. To ban artists because of their nationality is a mere degree away from any racialism such as the French government has repeatedly decreed.

Ulanova was not a slayer in Indo-China. She is a dancer. Russia will make great play in its anti-West propaganda of this stupid ban.

Meanwhile Peter Daubeny was negotiating for the appearance of Ulanova at the Stoll Theatre in London. A full report on these negotiations will appear in the next issue. It is interesting to see Daubeny's eager and well-paced attempt to sign the Russians. This is the kind of business management that ballet needs.

IN LONDON: At the Stoll a group of girls, "The Beryozka" or "Moscow State Dance Company" performed an unvariety of folk dances, round games and precision troupe routines like so many endless conveyor belts. Infectiously gay and young, these clean-scrubbed girls were neither professionally accomplished nor were they amateur folk dancers pure and simple. The mixture of the two that one finds in a girls' finishing school is probably the best corrolary.

Another critic asked me why Russia had not sent some male dancers. In reply I could only ask why they had not sent any dancers at all. Childrens' dance displays are charming, but hardly exportable as a serious theatrical venture.



COMING IN BALLET TODAY

The Rowena Jackson Story
with photographs

Istvan Rabovsky and Nora Kovach:
evaluation

Ballet's Dry Bones

Why I'm In Ballet—
dancers answer the question

Behind Ballet
in Canada and Australia

Dynamics in Ballet

Festival Ballet: a thought on
directions

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Name

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KATHERINE DUNHAM and
troupe had a triumph on
her German tour and
thrilled the audience with magni-
ficent performances.

The Vienna ice-ballet starring
Eva Pawlik and Rudi Seeliger
are also touring Germany.

Sonia Arova's new partner for
her Japanese tour is the most
interesting male dancer of the
Hamburg State Opera—Heinz
Schmiedel. He has a fine line,
a good elevation and an un-
mannered style and is well suited

GERMANY

—Eva Bülow

to Arova. Besides Peter van
Dijk here is another German
dancer given the chance to dance
with an international ballerina.

Now added to the repertoire
of the Staetische Opera L'In

different by Hans Haug and Otto
Maag and the Cocteau ballet *La
Dame et la Licorne* again in the
choreography by H. Rosen. The
last named proved the most
successful and the talented young
Veronika Mlakar, Gisela Deege
and Gert Reinhold in the princi-
pal parts aroused much interest.
Suse Preisser gave a really
beautiful performance as the girl-
friend in *L'Indifferent*.

Ballet master Vaslav Orli-
kowski ended the rehearsals of
the full-evening production *The
Black Korsar* in Oberhausen. The
music is by Ernst Hildenbrand
and the story a fairy-tale of 1,000
and one nights.

The company of the Paris
Grand Opera appeared at the
State Theatre Wiesbaden during
the May Festival. The pro-
gramme consisted of *Mirages*, *Les
Caprices de Cupidon*, *Suite en
blanc*, *Etudes*, *Phedre*, *L'Apres-
midi d'un Faune*, etc.

Edel von Rothe is perfectly
cast in *The Fantastic Sym-
phony* by Hector Berlioz in the
choreography by Yvonne Georgi
in Dusseldorf. The other featured
dancers of the company are
Horst Krause, Edgar Wenzel,
Ralph Briegk and Ursula Rieck.
Georgi leaves this troupe and
will join next season the ensemble
of Hanover in the position of
choreographer.

Highly successful was the
staging of *Le Renard*—music by
Strawinski—in Frankfurt by
Gunther Rennert, the super-
intendent of the Hamburg State
Opera. The Renard was danced
by Marcel Luipart, the Cat by
Irene Mann, the Cock by Herbert
Freund, who did also the choreo-
graphy and the Buck by the
excellent Werner Beer.

PEAK-HIGH

*Pampered child
Or Woman stillborn young
Fleeing the music of its cold
Fire, of its single point*

*Head-swaying stage and stall
Yet unmoved, empty frame whose
Heart ticks to a dedicated pulse
Made brittle on the flint of art*

*Mere move, mere mesmer lulling
Sibilant whispers, not roar'd applause
The hush'd chord of stillness before—
Before the house rises*

*Poster-plastered, ballerina named
But steady as rock-cut diamond core
Belying praise by practice more
And pinnacle by horizon scent
New height? New stature, so
Already, fully adored, adhered?
Or is praise not balm but lulling
Sleep to pass the dawn and miss new day*

*Two or three muses waiting, waiting
Will she sleep, drug'd, past the hour
Or meet in practice-cold the horizon
Which make tomorrow's lowland*

of today's peak-high.

The original drawing reproduced here is Les Sylphides by
J. M. Thornton.



Portrait
by
JUNE
RYAN

Text
by
RICHARD
AUSTIN

Nadia NERINA



THE attitude of British audiences to their dancers is a curious one, and goes some way towards explaining why Nadia Nerina has received a heartier welcome in the United States than any she has yet been given at Covent Garden.

While we admire immediately the verve of French artists, the flamboyance of Russians and the friendliness of Americans, we are rather inclined to distrust those qualities in our own dancers. The initial attitude towards a new soloist is one of polite reserve; it is a long time before we are more than formally introduced to one another.

But Nadia Nerina, first at Sadler's Wells and again at Covent Garden, did anything but act like a demure English miss waiting for an introduction. Pretty, merry, with her bright technique and gay smile, she bounced about the stage beside herself with glee. "Too pert by half; too cocksure of herself; ballet is a serious art; it's not fun"—a section of balletomanes recoiled in horror, and even now, when she is one of the leading soloists in the company, their approval is still somewhat reserved.

But the Americans have loved her, for they hate formality and distrust the aloofness of many of our dancers; and it is in England that audiences have yet to do full justice to her considerable talent.

Nerina excels in soubrette roles like *Mam'zelle Angot* and *Swanhilda*; where she is bewitching; as the young *Aurora*, because the character fits her own personality exactly—not because she is an outstanding classical ballerina. It is a case where the natural soubrette succeeds where the pure classical ballerina might leave the heart unmoved.

Her gaiety, warmth and high-spirits have made her *Aurora* one of real enchantment, although she is unable to sustain the role beyond Act I.

She has speed, superb elevation, a powerful technique, but not great musical or interpretative abilities. In serious roles like that of *Odette* she is liable to simulate a grand manner, and her pretty face to assume a tragic mask which does not become it. Nor, too, does her *Odile* succeed.

This *Odile*, one feels, is really a charming girl who has unaccountably developed a fit of sulking; the sneering expression is too naive and does not carry conviction. Such large works of the classical repertory, despite her brilliance and theatrical sense, are not for her.

Only the greatest dancers can live on the icy peaks of Parnassus. Nerina, at the moment, occupies the foothills and warm valleys, to which already she has brought more grace and gaiety than have most of her contemporaries.

THE RENAISSANCE of the DANCE: Premature?

V KAMENEV, in the current issue of *Anglo-Soviet Journal* (published by the S.C.R.) begins an article entitled "The Renaissance of the Dance" with this paragraph:

"Why did a few Soviet dancers, not particularly well presented arouse as much enthusiasm last November as the entire Diaghilev Ballet Company when it opened its first season in a most magnificent manner?"

Obviously the Communists were bound to answer the constant assertion that Russia had "missed" the Fokine/Diaghilev ballet revolution. But this is a rather belated claim. In no way did the appearance of the Soviet dancers last November create the impact of Diaghilev. And in no way, did their appearance proclaim a renaissance of the dance.

BRIGHT

The author of this article has cleverly managed facts to suit his purposes. He uses Grigoriev's artistically non-committal book, *The Diaghilev Ballet*, to prove that Diaghilev was a bright boy until his contact with native Russian sources dried up. He then became decadent. One fears that perversion had a greater influence upon the decadence of Diaghilev's companies than any drying up of Russian sources. He goes on to say that modern ballet has turned to singing and eroticism—yet Diaghilev did both, early in his career.

But is it in Mr. Kamenev's sweeping dismissal of criticism that one sees the really dangerous pen. The reason Italian critics could find fault with Ulanova is that she "upset all previous standards of perfection." So with Shelest.

This, of course, is a coverall weapon against all criticism. Now, using this hypothesis, any dancer can tell the critics that she is upsetting previous standards of perfection and so they must not judge her on such preconceived standards. Various supporters of modern dance have told us this cult must not be reviewed as a theatrical attraction. The two are complementary.

LIGHTLY

Mr. Kamenev deals lightly with critical quibbles. To dismiss the criticism of Shelest's "broken wrists" he publishes a photograph of Pavlova "showing her broken wrists." So? We also discover that if we see what looks like a bad arabesque, we must immediately realise it is an attitude, not an arabesque, and applaud accordingly.

Frankly, Shelest is too good a dancer to need this rush of defence. We are further reminded that Shelest passed examinations at a ballet school which is 215 years old. This makes impossible any criticism of technique. We shall now, apparently, be better to publish school report cards and markings rather than criticism. On "lifts" the article's author wonders why we bother as to whether the lifts destroy theatricability or fantasy. "Have we ever seen such lifts before?" he asks—and that is an end to the matter.

EXPERTS

It is also wrong for Mr. Kamenev to say that certain mistakes made by "English experts" were "a tragedy for the repute of criticism here." I do not remember reading the Piatnitski Trio's work described as Gopak during a Russian dance. If he is right here, it would have been more fair had he mentioned the names of the "offending" critics. As it is he apparently damns all on a single line by a single writer. The public often says, "Oh, the critics said . . ." after reading one paper. But a writer should be more informed.

This returns me, however, to the claim that this visit by an ill-dressed, ill-equipped group of dancers represented a renaissance.

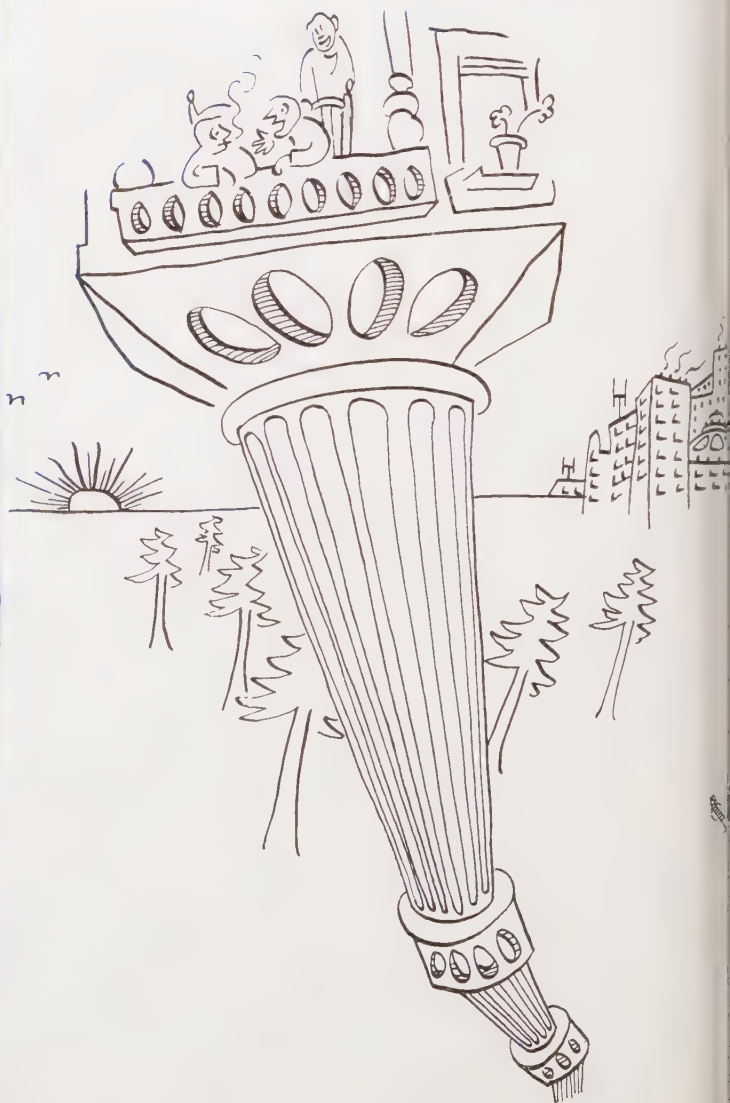
These dancers exhibited an excellent technique of dancing and, especially so with Farmanantz and in one solo by Shatilov, spectacular tricks and elevation. But an artistic renaissance calls for more visible manifestation than this. From what we see of ballet in the Soviet Union—with its antiquated decorations, seniority systems and reliance upon Petipa/Tchaikowski—the renaissance of the ballet is not yet upon us from Russia.

NEW

I feel that ballet will owe its renaissance to a new country, as being (on the surface) more adaptable to new and fresh ideas. If I am allowed a broad prophecy I would say America will become the ballet focal point with a gradual curve towards Asia and the Orient later. In ballet as in life the "white man's burden" must soon be taken off his back, no matter how he clings to it.

I doubt if Russia will serve as renaissance point. I am sure it has not done so now.

"en pointe of departure"



MY daughter has studied dancing since she was a tiny tot. I want to make this her career but her father and I feel it's a precarious existence. What do you think?"

To this so-often repeated question Odham's *Everywoman* magazine replied:

"It is quite true that openings for professional dancer are few, and competition very keen. On the other hand there are good opportunities for a teacher of dancing . . ."

And how tragic that is.

So long as children are trained as teachers, rather than as professional performers, so long will the fallacy of now being experienced in ballet continue.

The failures—of dancers, of companies, and especially of ballets—in the past ten years have been glossed over. But they are mounting. Both Graham and de Cuevas seasons in London this year failed badly. We know the reasons, but they are not important to this argument. The argument is that public disappointment with major productions is the hardest thing of all to relieve.

The ballet public, as it stands, is fairly shifting one. Enough recurrent blows at its belief in itself (in its po-

(ice selection, for example) will
ne the whole body and leave
thout its standing audience.

NG
writing on the new, huge
that ballet can attract, it is
to ignore the fact that what we
is slowly slipping away. Empty
no longer the rare exception
2, dancer unemployment is now
credible pitch: well over 80 per
the trained dancer product is not
king on a professional stage.
per cent is probably a conserva-

usly the wrong goal is being
ncers. Today it is not enough to
tent. In only a few cases is it
to be very good. Today the
must be a brilliant technician, an
ative, mentally strong but idealist-
fiable artist and above all a
orker. Luck and money help,
it is no longer enough to pass
dancer someone good enough
orps. The corps has not sufficient
to employ a thousandth part
roduced number.

by a tremendous upswing of
as, by a severance with old
by a revolt in some new choreo-
direction and by a new organisa-
dance utility will ballet survive



"The end of a dance epoch"

well. And only by these things will the teachers and schools survive. Somehow teachers must learn to say "No" to pupils more often than is the case now. In a short term way the maximum number in a class will give the teacher prosperity. But the rope she is weaving will eventually strangle her by its very size. The answer is not to produce teachers. Teachers with no stage experience are already crippling both children and the dance itself. And neither, as I have said, is it an answer to produce competence.

The teacher must burn herself out to produce, or help produce, the brilliant dancer.

DANCER

The dancer herself must somehow be brought into the creative work of choreography, rather than remain the pliable tool of the single choreographer.

It is, by this time, clear to see that no choreographer—no choreographer at all—has been of sufficient genius, versatility, contemporary adjustment-power or mental breadth to compose regularly for numbers of dancers. Few directors in the arts try to work a solo creation while being compelled to achieve through other bodies.

The new trend in choreography, when it emerges, might well be

forged not in solitude but by a communal effort, only buckling under the choreographer for final direction.

CHOREOGRAPHER

The choreographer's job is today to repeat himself basically—and repeat the choreographic basis of less than half a dozen more or less related predecessors—with mere garnishing (or "gimmicking") of novelty effects.

The choreographer's ambition opposed to his livelihood-dictated job, must be to find, if not a new tongue, at least a new way of propelling the tongue through teeth and lips to achieve a broad new effect. Not mere tricks, but a definite breadth of effect.

All variants of combinations have been tried—Jooss incorporated Cecchetti, Robbins and Kelly incorporated both free, modern dance and Americana ballet, Balanchine has been existing on the mental crust of ballet's bread for years. The choreographer now must expect in himself a wider knowledge of dance ideas (classic ballet, free dance, American modern, musical, cinematic, dance-drama, etc.) than the past choreographer ever possessed. In this past, choreographers have been labelled Romantic, Expressionist, Neo-realist and the rest. Today the new choreographer must be a composite montage of all of these.

His speciality must be dance, but no narrower speciality must be his goal.

Only in such a technical breadth can a new trend have a sufficiency of established basis and knowledge from which to evolve.

A much broader mental outlook, and intake, and a deeper spiritual consequence may also be genetically important if any new trend is to appear.

NOW

What is definite is that we are not now seeing any manifestation of tomorrow's ballet.

We are living at the end of a dance epoch and our chance of stepping unscathed over to the beginning of the new dance era is determinable by whether we are wide-eyed enough to see a cortege as it passes.

Some critics have been holding a one-man-wake for years. Others live, not in an ivory tower, but in a aberrated leaning tower whose phony halo fakes the light of a golden age. It is not necessary for us to know the eventual terminus, but if we are to be crew at all we must merely agree on point of departure.

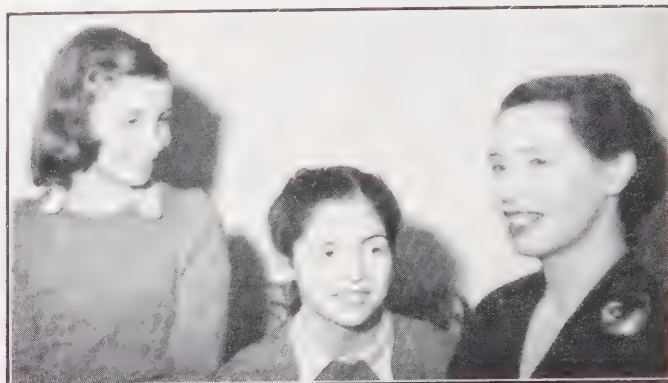
So far the dance world has seen no captain, launched no ship and signed on no definite crew.

But we do know that we have to move.

Advice to Ballet Mothers—by one



Fraucine Collement, just promoted at Paris Opera.



The writer of this article, Mrs. Cartwright, pictured with her "two aspiring dancers".

MUCH has been said and written about ballet mothers, mostly to their detriment. After reading an article recently in a Sunday newspaper, describing the influence a certain mother has on her daughter's career, one would certainly feel all the criticism was justified.

As a mother of two aspiring dancers, I would like to put in

a good word for the "backroom" mothers, of whom there are many I am sure.

What agonies we suffer when our offspring attend an audition. We know how much their success means to them, and suffer just as keenly as they do if they fail. Even when they succeed, there is the repeated nervous tension during each performance in which they appear. None of which one dares to show.

PAIN

We alone know of the pain from a blistered toe, or the cold which makes their head feel like cotton wool. Will it prevent them giving a good performance? Will the critics—ever ready to pounce—choose this night to notice their flagging spirits?

Backroom mothers exist to help their children over black spots such as these, and to ease the admittedly stormy path caused by their temperamental upheavals.

No dancer worth her salt is without the temperament which helps to make her an expressive instrument. To interpret a part, it is not sufficient for her to be able to dance the steps correctly. She must be able to change her whole personality to fit the part of the character she is portraying. These changes of mood cannot be confined to the stage alone. They are part of her, and give her the ability to feel joys and sorrows more intensely. (Potential husbands take warning!)

Such things as a laddered pair of tights, or a shoe not fitting properly, can bring black despair to a young dancer's heart. Mother must be calm and practical, to sooth the frantic child, and mend the laddered tights, and send her forth with renewed confidence. Again, she

Without the benefit of . . .

It is pleasant to ostrich walk one's way through the day under the potent benefits of an anaesthetic. We agree, but we hardly care to be the anaesthesist.

BALLET TODAY is not edited for ostriches or those who prefer their art in sugar-coated doses. Like the honest dentist of old, we may jar, we may plague you, we may make you want to jump out of reach . . . and, like him, we are happy to watch you. And we know that you will come back for the next visit, having discovered that gas not only kills pain but removes consciousness, too.

BALLET TODAY aims, not to please with the pretty-pretty, but to be healthy, active, and stimulating as only an individualist thinking can be. We aim for the lively, the incisive . . . the pompous, the official, the sacrosanct are our victims.

We make enemies, seriously—but never maliciously as the gossip-mongers do. And we make friends, not over the facile babble of teacups or cocktail glasses, but through the clear discussion of views and values in an adult way.

The subscription to BALLET TODAY is 15/- for one year. From your newsagent you may have it delivered at 1/- a copy. We only warn you that if it bothers you to think, then BALLET TODAY is not for you. Otherwise, we think you will find the magazine stimulating and honest. And that is our sole aim.

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Rambert

"... bits of classics and chaubles of Balanchine" are no more chamber ballet than snippets of symphonies or concertos are chamber music.

Mrs. Thoehill may not remember, as I do, how one of our greatest ballet pioneers started up, in a disused old church hall at Notting Hill. Maria Rambert taught her young dancers all the principles of the classical technique, but she staged short and intimate ballets which were perfectly adapted to the capabilities of her young dancers and her available resources at the time. So the result was stimulating and satisfying *ballet intime* or chamber ballet.

It developed a large, new dance-conscious public, which could have been bored or scared off by painstaking but dreadfully inadequate performances of the classics. And it gave brilliant young choreographers like Frederick Ashton and Walter Gore a chance to show what creative and adjustable minds can achieve, even with an old piano, a few yards of hessian and a trio or quartet of keen and gifted dancers.

Ruth M. Stoloff.

Horaven, Portscatho, Cornwall.

Akesson

The note on the great Swedish dancer Birgit Akesson in your *Who's Who In Ballet* is unfortunately misleading in one respect, even though the note is apparently based on the chapter on Akesson in my book *An Anatomy of Ballet*. Akesson did not tour America with Wigman: like many another "modern" dancer. Wigman could not tolerate for long the presence in her company of a dancer with a strong personality and creative power. In any case Akesson joined Wigman very early in her career, and the association was short-lived: in later years Akesson moved a long way from this sort of expressions "modern" to this sort of "modern dance, and now one of the most original and interesting creative artists in the dance world of today.

F. Hall.

4, South Hill Park, N.W.3.

Mr. Hall must not conclude that any misleading statement we publish is culled from his book. In fact, Edith Barking writes, "I have not been fortunate enough to read a copy of *An Anatomy of Ballet* as yet".



My Photograph of the Month by

Serge Lido

- This Lido photograph shows Yuriko and Bertram Ross in *The Canticale For Innocent Comedians*. This is a dance item in the Martha Graham repertoire. The photograph is reproduced here as Serge Lido's personal choice from his past month's work.

books

PARTNERING: *The Fundamentals of Pas de Deux.* By Richard Ellis and Christine du Boulay. (A Ballet Book Shop Publication, Chicago, U.S.A.)

The romantic ballet banished the male dancer from the stage, and soon his sole function was to support and to lift the ballerina without drawing attention to himself. With the advent of Diaghilev he made a glorious return, but still his greatest virtue in pas de deux is to be an unselfish and self-effacing partner. The ballerina's art is greatly enhanced by her partner; in adagio, it is wholly dependent on being supported with skill and authority. Otherwise, as is so often the case these days, her performance inevitably suffers; for this chivalrous art, outside of Russia, appears to be dying, and the number of truly great cavaliers can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

This little book, by two experienced and knowledgeable dancers, should be of the utmost value to all senior students of either sex. Richard Ellis will be remembered for his excellent work as soloist for many years with the Sadler's Wells Ballet. His wife, Christine du Boulay, after training at the school, also became a member of the company. Now they both teach in America.

The authors discuss the special attributes required by both partners in adagio work, they describe the various supported steps, and give a number of enchainements, as well as the pas de deux from Act I of *Coppelia* to Sergueev's choreography. There is an introduction by Frederic Franklin, and a number of rather amateurish line drawings.

P. C.

● Next month's **BALLET TODAY** features a dramatic portrait of Jeannaire, new drawings of Markova by Target, the Rambert season, preview on Festival Ballet and the story of Alexander Grant. Plus *Aisle Seat*, *Who's Who* and every regular feature including a new Lido photograph and several articles of certain interest to all who are interested in ballet, today.

IT never did nobody no harm, as O. Henry once pointed out, to be imitated. But those who copied O. Henry's colloquial style merely became cheaply down-at-mouth. Neither does it do **BALLET TODAY** any harm to be copied—but beware imitations which do not have "made in honest attempt" stamped upon them.

After nearly six months of upbuilding on the needs and potential of provincial chamber ballet, **BALLET TODAY** finds itself with a backer as of last month. Rather a humorous backer to be sure.

We welcome our brother to the fold.

But we would like to make it clear that our efforts on behalf of provincial chamber ballet have at all times stressed that such ballet must be professional. We did not set up shop as witty persuaders of the amateur movement. Our interest is in professional ballet, professional dancers—and the wider, provincial dissemination of such professionals.

So if you must read **BALLET TODAY**'s ideas elsewhere—don't drink the bathwater with the baby, please!

PHOENIX HOUSE, the publishers, gave an informal champagne party at the Arts Theatre club during April to launch *My Dancing Days*. This is the partial autobiography of Phyllis Bedells. And partial it would have to be, if one thinks of the amazingly full and long career she has had.

The book, she told me, took eight months to write. I pointed out to her that every guest was reading, not the book, but the index.

I suggested to Pamela May, one of the guests, that she merely publish an index sans book. Most people buy such a book merely to read their own name, so why be hypocritical about it?

On The Cover: Diana Adams of the New York City Ballet who appears in the comic "chase" ballet with Danny Kaye in Paramount's **KNOCK ON WOOD**. Diana and Danny are seen together in this still from the film.



But those who miss this Phyllis Bedells book because they are not mentioned will, I think, be missing a rich chronicle of a dancing life.

Other guests included Margot Fonteyn, Stanislas Idzikowski, Ninette de Valois, Lydia Kyasht, Frederick Ashton and Joss's daughter Barbara whom I discovered holding three glasses of champagne. Not greedy, apparently she is a Bedells' pupil and had been brought in to serve the champagne.

I WAS interested to meet Milorad Miskovitch at the Stoll Theatre during Janine Charrat's unfortunate season there. Miskovitch, of course, is Alicia Markova's partner, recently seen with her during the provincial tour.

He told me something of the effect which dancing with such an artist as Markova has on her partner. This mainly amounted to her total femininity and the pressure this forces on the man to be fully a "cavalier." Perhaps it is not that Markova has been fortunate in her partners—but that her partners have been fortunate in her. Certainly the cavalier has been replaced by the disrespectful, upstaging boor to a dismaying extent.

With Miskovitch, who is an essentially charming person, was Irene Lidova, the Paris critic and wife of photographer Serge Lido. As Irene is an ardent Markova praise-monger, the evening could have inaugurated a Markova fan club. Which it nearly did!

I HAVE commented elsewhere on the surprising alacrity of the house lights after Svetlana Beriosova's *Veneziana*. No less surprising was the acclaim given Peter van Dijk on Saturday, April 17, which exceeded that for Jean Babilée on the same evening. I hardly thought to hear a London audience usurp Jean's place by applauding a relative

Aisle

A COMMENTARY ON

newcomer. Having heard it, I thought it heartening. Of newcomers, more. Valerie Taylor, I hear, is understudying various principal roles at Covent Garden and may be seen in one any day now. Pauline Clayden, too, has a record that surprises me—no less than ten dramatic roles taken over from Margot Fonteyn. Her *Giselle* on April 24 and role in *Homage* on May 1 will be noticed in the next issue.

A NOVELIST requiring local colour or dialogue shots for the "great ballet novel" may have a helpmate in onetime Diaghilev ballerina Alice Nikitina.

Nikitina has set up a course, in Paris, for ballet critics! Now they can learn to practice what they preach, apparently. Perhaps more important she is offering a "Terpsichore Prize" during a contest being staged this month at the Theatre Sarah Bernhardt in Paris. French and foreign competitors will divide into three categories—dancers aged seven to eleven, dancers aged twelve to sixteen and choreographers aged fourteen to twenty-five. I am intrigued to see the choreographic ideas of a fourteen-year-old.

Winners in the first two categories will receive five years' free tuition at Nikitina's school. Choreographers will receive "money and a contract."

MOIRA SHEARER dances some of *Sleeping Beauty* in her new film *The Man Who Loved Redheads*. She also dances a Charleston and the Bunny-Hug. So good is her Charleston, apparently, that the studio had her coach co-star Patricia Cutts in the jerky intricacies of the dance. For the ballet sequence, a publicity handout tells me, Moira "needed no coaching." Rather on a par with a neighbour at Covent Garden the other evening whom my wife heard saying (after *Giselle*) "Yes, that Fonteyn has something." So true.

ACCORDING to an unconfirmed report, Ballet Theatre has rejected an offer by Galina Ulanova to appear with the company in New York this year.

eat

THE BALLET MONTH

he company, presumably represented by **Lucia Chase**, explained their rejection by saying Ulanova's offer was a propaganda move.

Ballet, least of the arts, can afford to impede itself with political partisanship. Every dancer should be free to hold whatever political or ideological beliefs they wish. But for a ballet company to become anti-Russian is such is incredible. Anti-Communist certainly—most of them are—but when so much ballet is Russian-originated it must be rather hard to demarcate.

Ballet Theatre, in my opinion, was tragically wrong in refusing ballerina Ulanova merely because she works in Soviet Russia. The Russians seem to continually win such international situations. By presenting the *Comedie Francaise* they proved their "internationality" of cultural interest. We, the great free nations, are afraid to even give stageroom to an acknowledged prima ballerina absoluta. This may seem pro-American, but it is certainly anti-art. And it must please no one better than the Reds who use such foolishness as the basis for their propaganda.

THE Russian for omelette champions and for a tight, inward turn in ballet, are apparently, similar words—gratuitous information from **Norah Kovach** who brought ballet even into our food over dinner. **Norah** and **Istvan Rabovsky** have had special copies made of the photographs and reviews which appeared of them in *Pravda* and other Russian newspapers. This is to counteract the gossip which has circulated that they did not, in fact, dance in Russia. Nonsense, of course. I hardly think these dancers, with the talent they have, need worry about the envious lies of the unsuccessful.

I TALKED to **Norah Kovach** and **Istvan Rabovsky** as they passed quickly through London on their way from New York to join Festival Ballet in Barcelona during May. Here for just two evenings they were the guests of **Margot Fonteyn** at the Opera House for one (*Homage, Symphonic Variations, Checkmate*) and watched *Aubade, Les Algues* and

Le Jeune Homme et la Morte at the Stoll on the second. An informal party at the Margot Fonteyn flat had **Babilee** as last-minute guest. He kept one secret from **Norah** and **Istvan**. The following evening, at the Stoll, they sat through what has become the dance they cannot get away from: *Don Quixote*.

They were hoping to extend their own repertoire during their stay with Festival Ballet. This company opens at Festival Hall on July 15 with the new production of *Esmeralda*. This ballet has its premiere this month in Brussels. **Natalie Krassovska** dances *Esmeralda*, **John Gilpin** is **Pierre Gringoire**, **Belinda Wright** is **Fleur de Lys**, **Oleg Briansky** is **Claude Frolo** and **Anton Dolin** is the priest, **Phoebus de Chateaupers**. The **Rabouskys** will dance *Sylphides* and *Scheherazade* during Festival's London season.

A COMPANY new to me, the Cork Ballet, has been appearing successfully at Cork Opera House Ireland, with **Joan Moriarty** as maitre d'ballet and with the Cork Symphony Orchestra. On the opening night they presented *The Twisting of the Rope* based on the **Douglas Hyde** play, *Pas de Trois* to **Dvorak** and *A La Degas*. In the Irish press the decor by **Hutson** was especially praised.

KATHLEEN GORHAM has joined the Borovansky Ballet in Australia and is dancing *Pineapple Poll* in John Cranko's production of this ballet for Borovansky.

OUR sympathies are extended to **Avril Navarre** who, unfortunately, due to her foot injury, will not be seen dancing at Covent Garden again this season.

IS it not time that Covent Garden followed the example of practically every other theatre in the world, by enclosing a slip in the programme notifying the audience of any alterations in the cast? The mistakes in the programme are usually countless. This is not playing the game with either the audience, who have paid to see the dancers, or the dancers, who are to perform. Let us see the correct names of those we are to applaud or condemn.

AT the end of their London season **Margot Fonteyn**, **Michael Somes**, **Pauline Clayden**, **Alexander Grant**, **Anya Linden**, **Brian Shaw**, **April Olrich** and **Michael Boulton** of Sadler's Wells will fly to Spain for two performances.

MARGARET DALE, at time of going to press, is preparing a new ballet for children's television.

SONIA AROVA is to sue

Margot Fonteyn at the *Phyllis Bedells Party*



Festival Ballet for breach of contract. The action is down for hearing in the Queen's Bench Division.

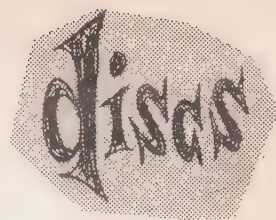
MARGOT FONTEYN and **Michael Somes** have three performances to give this month at the Belgrade International Theatre, Yugoslavia. They will dance *Lac des Cynges*.

REX GRIZELL wrote a profile of **Violette Elvin** for *John Bull*. . . **Peggy van Praagh** was featured in the *Sketch "Success Story"* series; why do none of her photographs show her as the vivacious and attractive personality she is? . . . **Cholita** danced on the **Yma Sumac** programme at the Albert Hall, April 25; hampered by having nowhere to work, she achieved little effect except to show more classical training than authentic Andean dancing . . .

SUMMER is the time of holidays, festivals, new ideas . . . that is why **BALLET TODAY** enervates an added zest for new readers in the summer. The next four issues of **BALLET TODAY** are all special numbers—all aimed at making **BALLET TODAY** the highest selling dance magazine now published.

You, the regular reader, benefit from this for an obvious reason. Every added feature, every new idea comes to you as part of the magazine you know and read every month. **BALLET TODAY'S** sales drives bring new readers in . . . and give added satisfaction to old readers. For ten months now **BALLET TODAY** has been raising its circulation on each issue. The coming months will further this trend and, while making more people read **BALLET TODAY** for the first time, will also keep regular readers more loyally with us than ever before.

BALLET TODAY is being read more widely now than any other dance magazine because of its stress on today's ballet, presented in a modern and readable way. Are you with us? Most dancers and dancegoers are.



SYMPHONY No. 7 (Beethoven). N.B.C. Symphony Orch. (Toscanini). HMV. ALP 1119.

It is the authority and strength of this fine interpretation that impresses one—Marsine needed courage to use Beethoven for his *Seventh Symphony*—and Toscanini sweeps all before him in a fine spirit of exhilaration.

The recording is good and clear except for a slight harshness occasionally, which need not worry one.

Symphony No. 1 (Prokofiev). *An American in Paris* (Gershwin). N.B.C. Symphony Orch. (Toscanini). HMV. ALP 1107.

Gala Performance is doing well—yet another "Classical" Symphony from which to choose.

I am still slightly inclined to Markevitch's interpretation but I enjoyed Toscanini's rendering and his firm attack. Gershwin's breezy work, splendidly played, will be remembered for the ballet sequence in the film. Recording good.

Variations on a Nursery Theme (Dohnanyi). *Sonata for Two Pianos K448* (Mozart). 1, C. Smith (piano) Philharmonia Orch. (Sargent). 2, C. Smith and P. Sellick (pianos). Columbia 33SX1018.

Both Dollar and Slavenska have used the Dohnanyi for their ballets, *Five Gifts* and *Portrait of a Ballerina* respectively, and would have fared better if they had initially appreciated the lighthearted character of the music. Smith and Sargent do not let it have all the gusto it can take—it lacks the richness of their old SP set.

Paris. In a Summer Garden. Summer Night on the River. (Delius). L.S.O. (Collins). Decca LXT2899.

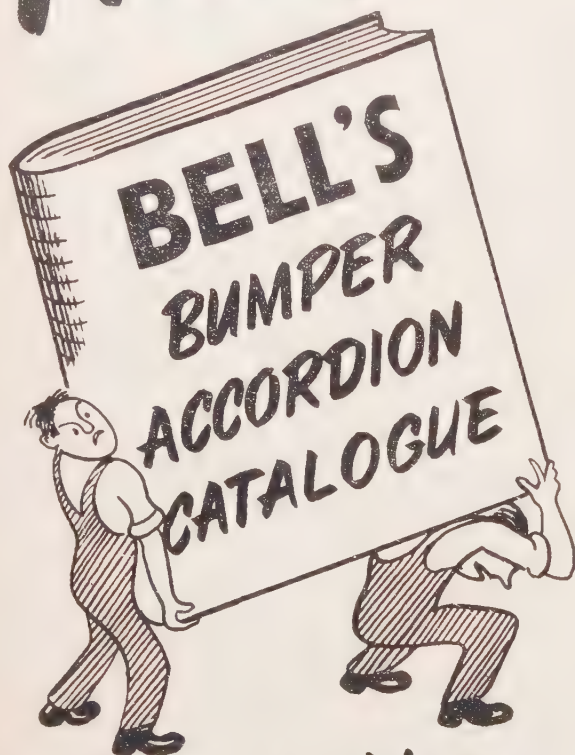
Nocturne was one of Ashton's loveliest ballets in which both Fonteyn and May excelled, and Fedorovitch's Edwardian dresses and decor set a standard of rich simplicity unlikely to be eclipsed. Collins has obviously given deep thought to Paris and although the other two works may have been equalled or even surpassed in interpretation, this is a superb disc which I most strongly recommend.

To page 21

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Rambert's story began in Poland as Miriam Rambach when she was one of the "more promising pupils" of Jaques-Dalcroze. As his pupil she was presented in 1913 for the approval of Serge Diaghilev and he engaged her for the Ballet Russe.

Rambert influenced Nijinski's *Rite of Spring* and *Afternoon of Faun* and became, herself, a pupil of Enrico Cecchetti before opening her own school in London in 1920. During the following years she sent her pupils for stage performances which led, in 1926, to her arranging ballet for a revue. She chose her most promising pupil—she had come two years previously—and had him choreograph a *Tragedy of Fashion* to her idea.

He was Frederick Ashton.

FEDOROVITCH

Another friend, who was to be Ashton's ally for two decades, designed the costumes: Sophie Fedorovitch who died last year after designing *Veneziana* for the Wells.

By 1930 she (and Ashton, and Fedorovitch) had several such performances behind her and she launched the first Rambert company—with Andree Howard (who choreographed the Well's *Veneziana* last year), Frederick Ashton, Antony Tudor, Pearl Argyle, Harold Turner and William Chapell.

In the same theatre as *Tragedy of Fashion* had been staged, the Rambert Dancers, as they were first called, premiered in 1930. To underwrite what was then as hazardous an adventure as it remains today, Rambert formed the Ballet Club with premises at her north London school which became the famed "little theatre" . . . the Mercury.

In this theatre were cradled—no word of mine fits better than the well worn but worn well cliché—the dancers and choreographers who were to save ballet in Britain from the vacuum left by Diaghilev's death: Walter Gore, Andree Howard, Antony Tudor, Frank Staff.

Markova danced there, Pearl Argyle was followed by Sally Gilmour, by Celia Franca, by—today—Mary Munro and Beryl Goldwyn and Mureen Sopwith.

UNINITIATE

Before the World War Rambert had worked her passage from the suburban Mercury to the hub-and-hearted Duchess and Duke of York Theatres to the Continent and—during the early '40's—to the provinces.

By war's end Rambert had knocked on the uninitiate doors and had them open spontaneously, happily to a new art, a new pleasure: ballet.

In 1946 came her first season at the Sadler's Wells Theatre and the debut of her first full classic: *Giselle*, of course. This season was repeated the following year before the gigantic Australasian tour which took them away for over a year, started a revolt by Australian dancers (nobody ever spoke to them like this before) and a rush by the same dancers to get to Britain (nobody had ever inspired them like this before)!

Further provincial and Continental tours followed the return from "down under" triumph, further appearances in London, and—in

August last year—a return to the Sadler's Wells Theatre to hear the almost hackneyed praise again.

Is this like talking of a continuous composite? Never. Rambert has chosen well, they say. No. Rambert has always chosen too well. Her dancers, her choreographers, her designers . . . all too good to stay long without greater reward and recognition than she could earn them. Yet, they have returned, too.

WHIPHAND

Agnes de Mille had words—whole chapters, if I remember aright—to say about Rambert. The hell of being slaved without a comeback of "why don't you . . ." Because Marie Rambert was always working before you started, still working when you were mopping the sweat off and thinking of supper. And yet, the feel of a whiphand that held greatness as its leather, confidence as its thong, success as its effect.

This was Rambert. That is Rambert. For the good of ballet it had better be Rambert for as long as she will keep on indefatigably talking, teaching . . . helping, healing . . . staging, succeeding . . .

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For one who has done so much, love is the only offering. Praise would be inane.



Beryl Goldwyn

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ACCORDING to A. V. Coton the advent of Martha Graham in London made history. He writes, in the *New York Dance News*, of a rave reception. The season, in fact, was marked (as he admits) by poor houses and (as he apparently didn't hear) by laughter at the pretentious glumness. Martha Graham's season did make history. It passed the limit which the London audience will tolerate.

I have seen these audiences tolerate unbelievable trash. And sit through it. At Martha Graham's performances they walked out, in two's and three's, evening after evening. A row of seven walked out during my last visit.

But Mr. Coton's report, printed in *Dance News*, does not merely give a rave to Graham, it goes on to that favourite pastime: dog eating dog. Mr. Coton remarks that dog does not eat dog, apparently under the delusion that his bite is worse because its bark is seldom. He sees no reason why he should not record

MAY WE UNINITIATES SPEAK?

"With us or Agin us" was taken to a new level by a London critic A. V. Coton (a **BALLET TODAY** contributor) who unleashed an attack on critics, dancers and theatre artists in general who did not accept Martha Graham. The Editor of **BALLET TODAY** takes up the challenge.

the astonishing reception given in a large part of the London press to Miss Graham's company by several other critic-dogs. He goes on to say that it would be legally risky to name these critic-dogs.

Let me name one of them for him, whilst appreciating his legal withdrawal. One of the critic-dogs who so astonishingly received Miss Graham's company was Peter Craig-Raymond. I regret not being able to take my place as one of the "few magnificently honourable exceptions" who did not sneer, or become confused, or deliberately misunderstand.

But, if I am not what Mr. Coton calls an honourable exception, neither did I sneer, become confused or misunderstand. By

season's end I understood all too well and I was too incensed by it all to even sneer.

Let me catalogue the symptoms Mr. Coton sees in those who did not genuflect before Miss Graham's Art.

We are: confused, vulgarly abusing, inane, maliciously underestimating. More than that we go round with heavy scales on our eyes. More than that we are equivalent to the London press that damned Diaghilev for presenting *Les Noces*. And (yes, more) we are insinuated as being as wrongly blind to Graham as once the press were to Picasso, Moore and Bartok.

But if the so-often mentioned trio were baited by the press it was, as Coton admits, during their early careers. Where is the com-

parison with Graham who can hardly be said to be in the first spring of her career?

No, Coton will have to do better than this. If a large section of the press, dancers, choreographers, managers and impresarios did not appreciate Graham it is because they were living in the present. Or, as once dancer put it to me, were "just normal."

Another dancer summed it up by promising to certify immediately as being "mentally healthy" all who saw nothing in Graham. Frankly I would rather be normal and healthy, even if it means accepting all the insults Mr. Coton's pen devised above.

But, and here the point, I would like to quote a few random adjectives from the reviews of Miss Graham.

Confused; esoteric; uncomfortably overloaded with a symbolism of movements that just does not reveal itself to an uninitiated audience; private language; language, cannot utter clearly; incomprehensible.

The author of these adjectives?
 A. V. Coton.

— PART FOUR — IN BALLET

Today

Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden

ay 26: *Sleeping Beauty*
(Fonteyn/Somes)

28: *Sleeping Beauty*
(Elvin/Hart)

ne 1: *Sleeping Beauty*
(Beriosova/Field)

3: *Sleeping Beauty*
(Nerina/Rassine)

5: Mat. *Veneziana, Giselle*
(Beriosova; Heaton)
Eve. *Patineurs, Ballet Imperial, Checkmate*

7: *Sleeping Beauty*
(Elvin/Hart)

10: *Sylphides, Ballet Imperial, Tiresias*
(Fonteyn; Elvin)

12: (No matinee). Eve. *Veneziana, Giselle*
(Beriosova; Fonteyn)

15: *Sleeping Beauty*
(Fonteyn/Somes)

16: *Checkmate, Ballet Imperial, Tiresias*
(Fonteyn; Elvin)

24: *Checkmate, Symphonic Variations, Coppelia*
act 3 (Fonteyn, Nerina, Beriosova, Clayden)

26: Mat. *Veneziana, act 3 Coppelia, act 3 Sleeping Beauty* (Fonteyn, Beriosova, Lindsay). Eve. As matinee plus Nerina

Season ends on June 26 and the company opens again in Edinburgh, at the Empire, on August 23 in a Diaghilev repertoire. Notice Elvin's first Aurora since her injury and Beriosova's first Aurora—Elvin on May 28, Beriosova on June 1.

Ballet Rambert

ay 31: Battersea Park Theatre

ne 7: Battersea Park Theatre

14: Sadler's Wells Theatre
season until the 26th.

Ballet Comique

ne 14: Newcastle Royal

21: Bournemouth Pavilion

28: Manchester Opera House



Beryl Grey
(Photo: Derek Allen)

G

John Gilpin. Born in Southsea and was first taught by Southsea dance teacher Tina Pearce. Later studied at Cone-Ripman, appeared on stage in *Peter Pan* and on film in *The Years Between* and *They Were Sisters*. In 1945 joined Rambert School before joining Ballet Rambert in 1948. He was a Rambert dancer during the Australian tour. He joined Roland Petit in the Ballets de Paris in 1949, moved to the Cuevas Ballet and then to Anton Dolin's Festival Ballet where he remains.

Sally Gilmour. Born in Malaya

of Scottish parents. Studied in Singapore under Doris Wright and, coming to London, under Marie Rambert. Joined Ballet Rambert and became this company's ballerina before taking up residence in Australia where she has been doing straight theatre work.

Beryl Goldwyn. Another Rambert dancer, recently becoming more important as a soloist and being given several new roles. Will be seen during Rambert's Sadler's Wells Theatre season.

Serge Golovine. Male soloist with the Cuevas Ballet where he shares roles with Skibine. During the last London season of the Cuevas Ballet we saw his first attempt at choreography and he is currently working on a new ballet. Born in Monaco of Franco-Russian parents.

Ram Gopal. Born in Bangalore. Has studied principal Indian classical styles, especially Kathakali. Started his career with La Meri, later gave recitals before forming the first of his many companies in London. Mainly taken up now with lecturing (this

year in the U.S.) film choreography (for Paramount's *Elephant Walks*, just about to be released) and short tours with his own company.

Josephine Gordon. Born in London. First taught by Van Dusen, later won scholarship to Royal Academy of Dancing. At fourteen went to Sadler's Wells School, and when the Theatre Ballet was formed became its youngest member. From 1947 to 1949, soloist with Metropolitan Ballet. During 1949 soloist with Alan Carter's St. James Ballet and associated with Carter in the Empire Ballet. After making North American tour with Sadler's Wells she appeared on TV., as dancer in Bernard Miles Mermaid Theatre and at Ballet Workshop, Players Theatre, etc.

Walter Gore. Studied under Marie Rambert. Has danced with Vic-Wells and Camargo Society. Now has his own company which mainly features ballets of his creation. Recently choreographed *Wedding in Paris* musical.

Katharine Gorham. Born Sydney, Australia. Trained by Isabel Anderson, Lorraine Norton and Leon Kalleway. Appeared with Borovansky Company and joined Ballet Rambert in Australia 1948. A 1949 scholarship took her to Sadler's Wells school and she joined Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in 1951. Rejoined Borovansky for Australian tour before returning to Europe in 1953. While studying with Preobrajenska in Paris she joined the Cuevas Ballet.

Beryl Grey. Born 1927, in London. Commenced dancing at an early age under Madeline Sharp. At the age of 9 she obtained a scholarship to Sadler's Wells School. In 1941 joined Sadler's Wells Company, 1942 she danced her first solo, *Sabrina* in *Comus* at Cambridge. On June 11, 1942, her 15th birthday, danced Odette/Odile in *Swan Lake* at New Theatre. On June 11, 1944, she danced *Giselle*. March 1953 she was guest artist at the Royal Opera House of Stockholm where she danced the first production of *Lac Des Cygnes* in Sweden. Also visited Brussels as guest artist. Appeared in first 3D ballet film to be produced in Britain which was an excerpt from *Lac*. Has appeared on TV. She is married to a surgeon and has recently given birth to her first baby.

lises — from page seventeen

Symphony No. 4 (Mendelssohn). *Symphony No. 4* (Schumann). L.S.O. (Krips). Decca KT 2887.

Francoise Adret's *Il Ritorno* to Mendelssohn's Italian Symphony. Adret, tired of the imitations of arranging dances for the Netherlands - Opera,

formed her own ballet troupe—assisted by our Gordon Hamilton, this was one of their opening ballets. The romantic charm of this symphony, Krips captures so well and with such lightness. I have no reservations—it charmed me. The Schumann is almost equal in excellence.

B. C.

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MARKOVA and MISKOVITCH

Alicia Markova

AT the Albert Hall on April 15, S. A. Gorlinsky presented the final concert of the current British tour of Alicia Markova and Milorad Miskovitch, with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Robert Zeller.

The programme, a very short one if the orchestral interludes are ignored, consisted of a suite from *Sylphides*, *Bolero* 1830, *L'Après-Midi d'un Faune*, *Dying Swan* and *Casse*.

What is there to say of Markova? Writing an introductory note Arnold Haskell quotes a description of Taglioni. I hate descriptions of the long-dead grafted with a facile similarity upon the living. Rather a simple adjective. Wonderful. Is that the word? I think, perhaps, it is.

LATENT

Miskovitch, whom we have seen with the Cuevas company, is a male dancer of rather more latent than exposed talent. He is feeling his way, lunging out of embryo so steadily that even his caution is better than the confidence of his elders.

He danced the faune with a pent-up strength that made nonsense of the tame, staid-when-new choreography. Nijinski had an idea in *L'Après*, but lacked the talent to express it. Only his own personality could have made a sensation of this ballet, no matter how realistic the esoteric ending.

In the two classical suites Miskovitch proved an excellent partner and a talented dancer in his own right.

Ballet Mother from page 14

must be waiting with appetising and health-giving food, to succour the weary, hungry dancer after the performance. A dancer cannot eat before a show. Nervous tension seizes the stomach muscles and food would literally make her sick. Also she must feel as light as air, if she is going to look it, to any degree.

Once the performance is over, however, she can, and needs to eat a great deal of energy-giving food. This is where a backroom mother can be such a help to a dancer. How sorry I feel for those who have to prepare a meal for themselves when ravenously hungry and physically exhausted. We who truly love our children, willingly suffer that their lot should be a little easier. We have our compensations in their triumphs, for any mother will tell you that the successes of her children, when honestly won, are more to her than any of her own.

EXPLAINS

This may be explains the aggressive behaviour of the so-called "ballet mother". It is not

their children's happiness and fulfillment they work for, so much as their own, intensified through the child. The instinct to fight for and protect one's young, starts the course of action, but they become intoxicated with any success their children may have, and will stop at nothing to push them to greater heights.

The fact that the child often suffers by being forced and overshadowed by the mother, is quite overlooked in their quest for bigger and better parts for their darlings.

How can a girl's personality develop, when mother decides everything and acts for her in all matters?

May I suggest to all mothers of talented children, that they should think carefully about the part they play in their children's lives. So much harm and so much good can result from that decision. It is well to consider what is most important for the full development of—the child even if worldly success is not the direct result.

Short Reviews

● Margot Fonteyn returned as Giselle on April 19 and made a fresh, living tragedy of this fermented classic. She danced superbly, improving her mime and acting as a polish upon the seemingly unimprovable dancing of the role. Michael Somes was an admirable Albrecht and Anya

Linden continued her swift improvement in the first act *pas de deux* with Brian Shaw, also on top form. Act Two seemed tighter than before and certainly the better for it.

● Svetlana Beriosova danced *La Favorita in Veneziana* on the same evening. If this was not the showcase the proven and mature Elvin needed, it suffices as a vehicle for the supposedly unproven Beriosova. She danced excellently. I was not a little puzzled by the way in which the stage management upped the house lights and killed Beriosova's applause after one solo curtain.

She had, in my view, a very real success as *Sylvia* and her mature work in this role makes it ironic that she has not yet been promoted ballerina in the Wells' official record. She is a ballerina to everyone else. Whenever the Wells' do decide to give her the name and not merely task her with the deed, their decision will be belated and slightly amusing.

Many companies call their soloists ballerinas, few call their ballerinas by the lesser name.

Chatfield was correspondingly youthful and has the starved look of the loveshot which makes him an excellent Aminta. Field's Orion and Grant's Eros were well-danced and the production in general was paced well.

Sylvia remains one of the best dressed and decorated ballets in the repertoire.

N E X T PORTRAIT OF JEANMAIRE
MONTH IN REVIEW . . . THE
SOVIET SEASON IN PARIS
—WHAT HAPPENED

Beriosova as Sylvia, with Chatfield

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA danced *Sylvia*, partnered by Philip Chatfield, on April 14 at Covent Garden.

This was a sharp and eager *Sylvia*, as young and dashing as a Diana huntress should be. Beriosova worked tremendously to achieve effect, and showed none of the effort or strain. Her performance was thoroughly good and upheld the standard of dancing which *Sylvia* has achieved from Sadler's Wells' ballerinas.

If it had a flaw, this was probably in the "Bacchic" dance. This is choreographically weak, it is as bacchanalian as the typical ballet "Chinese" dance is Chinese or "Hungarian" dance is Hungarian. But this is not the dancer's fault. Beriosova has not the outlook or physical temperament to suggest the abandoned houri of any kind, and it would be the choreographer's task to have the eroticism conveyed by the dance ideas rather than leave it to the dancer's personality.

MINOR

This is a minor criticism so far as Beriosova is concerned.

A profusely illustrated biographical study of the French dancer, Roland Petit, his ballets and his dancers.

Written by one of London's most prolific young dance critics, the book should prove of special interest to students, teachers, balletomanes, in fact anyone who is the least bit interested in the universal subject: Ballet.

There is a check list of Petit's ballets along with a number of striking photographs of: Margot Fonteyn, Serge Perrault, Colette Marchand, Violette Verdy and Renee Jeanmaire.

"Roland Petit" is an interesting evaluation of a controversial subject by a writer who is not afraid to set down what he thinks . . . as a reading of the final chapter titled: "Home Epilogue" will show. Following is a brief passage from the chapter—

"Anarchy may be the French substitute for the English submissiveness to technique and technique's discipline. But, correct though it is, today's English ballet is a cold, conventional, theatre-less exercise . . ." And further on: "At the root of this problem, of course is the school and the teacher. Here the English dancer is in most danger. Many ballet teachers in this country have too staid an ambition, too low an ideal. Hundreds of these schools and teachers are bent on producing corps-de-ballet . . ."

Gordon Keith reviewing the book in the American *Dancing Star* magazine.

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Surbiton

Roland Petit

by

PETER CRAIG-RAYMOND

- This biography and souvenir of the revolutionary French dancer, now making "The Glass Slipper" for MGM with Leslie Caron, contains photographs of the dancers, the ballets, costume and decor designs, a number of evaluations of both ballets and performances and an epilogue addressed to teachers and dancers. "How good to have a critic of one's own generation," said Roland Petit . . . "lavishly illustrated," said *The Sketch* . . . and the book has received excellent reviews in such magazines as *Toute La Danse*, *Tanzarchiv*, *Danceland*, *Dance News*, *What's On* and elsewhere. *Dance News* said, "the best five shillingsworth in ballet publishing."

FIVE SHILLINGS (by post, 5/4)

